

State Soil Conservation Committee

Final Minutes
April 18, 2024

Van Funk, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

The minutes of March 2024 were approved. (Feldt/Swaine)

The following appointments were made upon proper motion, second, and vote:

Anne Arundel SCD – Christine Catterton (Jarboe/Wurmb)

Presentations

Matt Rowe, MDE updated SSCC and attendees on Maryland's three-prong approach for addressing Conowingo Dam. First, Constellation, operator of Conowingo Dam, needs a Water Quality Certification (WQC) pursuant to the Clean Water Act. An initial WQC was issued in 2018 but was challenged legally. Now, MDE and the litigation parties are working toward a time-bound mediated approach, inclusive of new science about Conowingo, that can lay groundwork for a new WQC. Second, a Conowingo WIP has been developed with Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York. Funding in the watershed will provide pay-for-success and traditional cost-share grants to be implemented. The initial pay-for-success pilot in Maryland closed January 22 with 19 proposals received. Final selections will likely occur in May.

Next, Jeff Fretwell, MDE, shared project information from the state's Clean Water Commerce Act that purchases "environmental outcomes" to help the state achieve the Chesapeake Bay nutrient goals. Agricultural projects are eligible under the funding source as of fiscal year 2023. The solicitation resulted in 36 applications, with 22 being agricultural projects. After review and scoring (with MDA input), 11 projects were selected. Project contracts are still proceeding, and an FY24 funding solicitation closed January 31, 2024. Applications are still being reviewed. In addition, new legislation will allow MDE to make non-uniform payments for the projects over the contract term.

Finally, Alisha Mulkey, MDA reviewed the state's annual progress toward the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). It is important to remember that WIP goals are just one of the outcomes (31 total) outlined in the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. Agreement signatories include the six states, DC, EPA and the Chesapeake Bay Commission – i.e. changes will require consensus of all parties. While the majority of focus has been placed on water quality, many parallel outcomes are being pursued by 2025 with success, such as blue crab abundance. As the 2025 timeline draws near, MDA and the ag sector continue to make steady progress toward our WIP conservation goals. Data and figures for state cumulative progress were reviewed and will be presented at the county scale for SCD one-on-ones this month. Funding incentives and resource alignments being led by MDA are also ensuring focus on key conservation goals. These efforts will continue to occur, alongside MDA and Governor Moore's leadership. The Administration has begun to consider new strategies to reinvigorate, rethink, and reengage on Bay restoration, in ways that will benefit the innovative and progressive stewardship of Maryland farmers. More details will be shared as they are decided, and consensus is achieved.

Following the presentations, attendees had Q&A with the speakers.

Slides from the presentation will be distributed.

Reports

Alisha Mulkey for MDA reported the Central Area Coordinator position will be advertised soon.

The FY25 budget for MACS Capital has been approved at \$5 million.

Nutrient Management is working on draft regulations for the new permitting on organic food residuals, to be effective July 1.

The Whole Watershed Act passed in the 2024 session, and MDA will begin collaborating with other agencies on prescribed goals.

Byron reminded SCDs to submit their annual budget request ASAP.

Rob Feldt, DNR reported DNR celebrated Arbor Day on April 3 at the State House. Legislators in attendance received tree seedlings. National Arbor Day is April 26.

A busy fire season is underway.

214,000 acres of state forest land have re-certified by the Forest Sustainability Council for an additional five years.

Jim George, MDE no report.

Darren Jarboe, UM Extension reported The Agricultural Nutrient Management Program (ANMP) has received requests for 1,156 nutrient management plans, 75% have all the information needed to write the nutrient management plans, and 17% are new to the ANMP. Of the plans with complete information, 79% have been delivered to farmers.

The AgFS Program has 12 positions in various stages of recruitment. Three Charles County AgFS educator candidates presented in the county on April 5th and an offer has been made. The AgFS vegetable production specialist and ruminant livestock specialist positions have reached the best consideration date and candidates will be assessed soon. The Caroline County AgFS educator position description has been submitted to human resources and is expected to post on the University of Maryland (UMD) website around May 10.

The faculty specialist, ANMP program director candidates have been evaluated and the best consideration date extended 30 days. The faculty specialist for nutrient management training position is expected to post on the UMD website soon. Offers have been made to four nutrient management advisor candidates and they have accepted. Candidates must complete more human resources steps before being officially hired. The nutrient management advisor in Carroll County resigned effective in April and the Charles County advisor will retire in May. These positions will be advertised soon.

Grants received:

Beale, B. (2023-2025) Managing Stubborn Soil Borne Diseases in High Value Vegetable Crops. Maryland Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant. \$25,000.

Suzy Daubert, NRCS reported FY24 final funding allocations have been given.

The Maryland CIG application period will open soon. See www.grants.gov for additional funding opportunities.

Training for Cultural Resources, part II is being tentatively scheduled for May 15-16.

Jen Nelson for MASCD reported Brad Gingras is confirmed as the keynote speaker for the summer MASCD meeting.

The SCD priorities for small pond fee authority and the Frederick County SCD boundary passed in the legislative session and will go to Gov. Moore for signature.

MASCD and SSCC are collaborating on an SCD survey as a follow up to the 2020 Leadership Assessment. Please review the survey at a coming Board meeting and submit by June 14.

Amy Posey, Southern MD reported

Calvert SCD:

- On March 23rd they had their Cooperator Dinner, which was well attended.
- Jason Leavitt the new District Manager for Calvert SCD has accepted the position. He will be starting on April 22.
- Envirothon will be held on April 23rd.

Charles SCD:

- Charles County's Envirothon competition was held on April 17th. All Charles County high schools participated.
- The Charles SCD's Annual Cooperator Dinner will be held on May 22nd. Invitations will be forthcoming.

Prince George's SCD:

- Annual Cooperator of the Year Award tomorrow evening April 19th.
- Envirothon will be held on April 24th.

St. Mary's SCD:

- Participated in a meeting with Congressman Hoyer regarding an upcoming shoreline project on Naval Air Station Patuxent River. Meeting was held at the St. Mary's Agricultural Service Center on April 5, 2024. Topic of the meeting was project funding and project design to incorporate coastal resiliency.
- Held the St. Mary's County Envirothon competition on Wednesday, April 10, 2024. Had eleven teams compete from the three public and one private high school. A team from Leonardtown High won the competition winning all 5 high score awards and a total of 410 points out of a possible 500. The team from Leonardtown will compete at the Maryland Envirothon in June.
- Three District supervisors, the DM, the DC and the Program Manager all participated in the St. Mary's County WIP III progress meeting held by MDA's Elizabeth Hoffman and Alisha Mulkey on April 11th.
- Submitted Farm Credit Outstanding District award along with other service awards to MASCD.

District Wide

- A new forester was hired, Chase Kolstrom. Chase covers all of Area 2.

Tony Riggi for Upper Shore reported the Kent County Cooperator Dinner was held recently with 150-160 people in attendance.

Corn planting has started and manure is being spread.

Ed Wurmb, Western MD reported the Washington County Envirothon was April 4. A new middle school team participated.

Van Funk, Central MD reported

Baltimore County SCD

- The Board voted to help sponsor the 2024 MASCD Summer meeting.
- The District presented their annual Consulting Firm and Consultant of the year awards on April 17
- Baltimore County Government is establishing an Agricultural Advisory Board. A District Supervisor will be a voting member and the District Manager will be an advisory board member. Extension and NRCS will be advisory members also. The other voting members will be from several different agricultural sectors and ag businesses.
- District staff attended the MACS update meeting.

Cecil SCD

- Cecil SCD held their Envirothon Spring Training on March 22
- District provided presentations at two local elementary schools in celebration of Earth Day.
- CSCD plans to hold the spring Envirothon competition on 4/22 with 8 teams representing 6 county high schools.
- Planning is wrapping up for the first annual Cecil County Ag Education Day. The event is planned to educate approximately 1200 Cecil County 7th grade students over the course of three days (April 30 to May 2). Students will visit 12 different stations learning about agriculture, technology, conservation, food safety & food science, and more. CSCD staff will be

presenting in 3 of the 12 stations highlighting the importance of conservation, science and technology used in agriculture.

Harford SCD

- On April 2, Harford SCD met with the team volunteers that will handle the “Soils Station” which will include a soils pit, watershed hydrology demo, and more. This was a coordination meeting in preparation for the expected participants at the Harford County Farmer Community Partnership Committee’s 6 th symposium dubbed “Nourishing our Resources Together”. The 6th symposium will be held on May 11, 2024 at the Deer Creek Overlook 4-H Camp in Harford County.
- On April 5, Harford SCD participated and help lead the Harford County Envirothon “Spring Workshop” at Harford Glen. Several high schools participated in this training exercise.
- On April 15, Harford’s April newsletter was published and distributed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Alisha Mulkey
Executive Secretary

SSCC Attendance: April 18, 2024

Members:

Van Funk
Amy Posey
Ed Wurmb
Rob Feldt
Darren Jarboe
John Swaine
Jim George
John Murphy
Hans W. Schmidt
Suzy Daubert

Absent:

John Sullivan
Steve Freeman
Terry Nuwer

Others:

Robert Baldwin, Kent SCD	Steve Darcey, PGSCD
David Scheler, Anne Arundel SCD	Gail Myers, PGSCD
Jim Ensor, Baltimore County SCD	Anthony Riggi, QASCD
Ashley Brown, Calvert SCD	Mark Carey, Somerset SCD
Chris Brown, Cecil SCD	Bruce Young, St. Mary's SCD
Dee Dee Saunders, Charles SCD	Haley Carter, St. Mary's SCD
Luis Dieguez, Charles SCD	Dee Price, Washington County SCD
James "Smokey" Stanton, Garrett SCD	Lori Flook Bishop, Washington County SCD
Quintin Cornwell, Harford SCD	Mark Kendle, Washington County SCD
David Plummer, Howard SCD	Chelsea Tyson, Worcester SCD
Eric Hines, NRCS	Byron Petrauskas, MDA
Genevieve Lister, NRCS	Adam Lyon, MDA
Jen Nelson, MASCD	Harrison Palmer, MDA
Matt Rowe, MDE	John Tarr, PGSCD
Jeff Fretwell, MDE	Michael Calkins, MDA
Jason Keppler, MDA	Alisha Mulkey, MDA
Richard Glasgow, Wicomico SCD	